



DECISION MEMO
MINE CREEK DAM REMOVAL
U.S. FOREST SERVICE
MENA-ODEN RANGER DISTRICT
POLK COUNTY, ARKANSAS

BACKGROUND

The purpose of this project is to remove a concrete dam to provide connectivity of Mine Creek to the Cossatot River, for aquatic organism passage and movement of stream material. The dam is located half on US Forest Service land and half on private land. Access to remove the dam with heavy equipment has been granted on the private land that adjoins the dam at (Township 3S, Range 29W, Section 32) South of Mena Arkansas.

DECISION

I have decided to allow for the removal of the dam at the confluence of Mine Creek and the Cossatot River.

This activity falls into a category of action that may be excluded from documentation in an environmental impact statement (EIS) or an environmental assessment (EA), which the Chief of the Forest Service has determined will not have a significant effect on the human environment:

Restoring streams by removing water control structures to allow water to flow into natural channels and floodplains and restore natural flow regimes... (36 CFR 220.6(e)(18))

I find that there are no extraordinary circumstances that would warrant further analysis and documentation in an EA or EIS. I took into account resource conditions identified in agency procedures that should be considered in determining whether extraordinary circumstances might exist:

- Federally listed threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat, species proposed for Federal listing or proposed critical habitat, or Forest Service sensitive species – the action will have no effects to PETS species. (Biological Evaluation April 8, 2019)
- Flood plains, wetlands, or municipal watersheds –no floodplains or jurisdictional wetlands will be impacted by project activities; there are no municipal watersheds in the project area.
- Congressionally designated areas such as wilderness, wilderness study areas, or national recreation areas – none are present within the project area; none will be affected.

Potential for impacts to the wild and scenic river features of the Cossatot have been assessed in a Section 7a determination reviewed and signed by Regional Forester Ken Arney October 21, 2019. Activities are largely beneficial or have no impact on river values.

- Inventoried roadless areas or potential wilderness areas – none are present within the project area; none will be affected.
- Research natural areas – none are present within the project area; none will be affected.
- American Indians and Alaska Native religious or cultural sites – none are present within the project area; none will be affected.
- Archaeological sites, or historic properties or areas – SHPO concurrence was received September 9 2019 no historic properties affected. The following technical requirements have been recommended by the district archeologist; work will be monitored by an archeologist, following two rainless days between March 1st and November 30th or seven rainless days any other time of the year.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

A notice of the proposed action was mailed to subscribers of the District's NEPA projects on August 5, 2019, soliciting comments on the project. Arkansas Department of Health responded with notification that the project falls within the Wellhead Protection Area's for Caddo Waterworks Inc. and Sugar Creek Lodge.

FINDINGS REQUIRED BY OTHER LAWS AND REGULATIONS

This decision is consistent with the Revised Forest Plan as required by the National Forest Management Act.

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW (OBJECTION) OPPORTUNITIES

Decisions that are categorically excluded from documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) are not subject to an administrative review process (pre-decisional objection process) (Agriculture Act of 2014, Subtitle A, Sec. 8006).

IMPLEMENTATION DATE

The project may be implemented immediately.

CONTACT

For additional information concerning this decision, contact Jade Ryles at 479-394-2382, 1603 Hwy 71 North, Mena, AR 71953



2-025

10/29/19

Tim Oosterhous
DISTRICT RANGER

Date

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